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Oct. 15 Caregiver Workshop
& Resource Day—
see pg. 5

Oct. 22 Aging in Place in
WNY—9 am-noon
FREE Information
Fair at the Harvey
Morin VFW, 965
Center Road in West
Seneca See pg. 3

Nov. 4 1 pm Senior Services
Public Hearing at
Hamburg Senior
Center

Nov. 22 National Stop the
Violence Day—Call
858-6877 Protective
Services for Older
Adults to report elder
abuse.

60 PLUS



Attend the Public Hearing at Hamburg Senior Center on Nov. 4

Erie County Dept. of Senior Services will hold a Public Hearing on November 4th at 1:00 pm (following Stay Fit Dining lunch) at the Hamburg Senior Center, 4150 Sowles Rd, Hamburg, NY 14075. The Department will have a draft version of the 2006 service delivery plan, and is particularly interested in hearing from people who have used County-provided services such as Stay Fit Dining, Going Places Transportation, the Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program, case management or caregiver assistance, or any other programs. You are welcome to voice your opinion about needs of the community and older adults, and this is an opportunity to help us understand your concerns and priorities for services. To register to speak, call Senior Services at 858-8544.

Message From the Commissioner...

Is Erie County Ready for the Age Wave?

Later this year, Congress will have an opportunity to assure that each community across the United States has the appropriate resources to prepare for both the challenges as well as the opportunities of the coming “age wave.” When President Lyndon Johnson signed The Older Americans Act into law on July 14th, 1965, it became the guiding force behind our nation’s aging services network. Over the past 40 years, the Act has evolved to meet the changing needs and expectations of our elder citizens. It is time, once again, not only for reauthorization, but indeed it is a necessity for the Act to evolve.

The Older Americans Act clearly affirmed our Nation's sense of responsibility toward the well-being of all of our older citizens. This legislation was the foundation upon which the Aging Network built an effective and efficient infrastructure for aging service delivery at the federal, state and local level. But even more, the reauthorization of this act, in past years, has helped us to expand our opportunities for enriching the lives of all of our citizens in this country.

With 77 million baby boomers in the United States, we must turn our attention to the “quiet crisis” although there is nothing quiet about it. The aging of our population will have a tremendous impact on every community throughout America, regardless of populations, and that includes Erie County.



Commissioner
Pamela M. Krawczyk

Fall Passport to Wellness Walks

The Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo, Erie County Dept. of Senior Services, City of Buffalo Senior Services, and America on the Move present this program especially for adults 50+.

A registration fee of \$10.00 for the series, or \$3.00 per walk, may be paid ahead of time or on the day of the walk. Call **851-4052** for more information and a brochure. Registration starts at 9:30 am; each walk starts at 10:00 am:

Friday, September 30 at Martin Luther King Park—Bronze Head of MLK;

Fri. October 7 at Delaware Park/Parkside Lodge/Agassiz Circle;

Fri. October 14 at South Park/Botanical Gardens

Fri. October 21 at the Delaware Park Rose Garden.

Each walk lasts about 45 minutes and a light nutritious snack will be provided.

- Erie County's population is aging – **by 2015 almost 1 of every 4 residents will be 60+.**
- The cohort aged **85+ is the fastest growing** segment of the population.
- Despite the vitality of older adults, **50% of all persons age 75+ have one or more disabilities.**
- Rapid growth is projected in both the younger and older minority populations. Between 1980 and 2000, Erie County's **minority elderly population grew by 70%.**

As the baby boom generation ages, our community needs to develop supports that meet their unique social and economic needs. It is estimated that 89% of boomers want to "age in place". As the focal point of service delivery to Erie County's older adults, the Department of Senior Services serves as the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), the local component of the Aging Network, and the catalyst to assist our community in planning for the future. We continue to leverage federal dollars with other federal, state, local and private funds, to meet the needs and provide a better quality of life for Erie County elders

However, the Aging Network cannot meet these challenges alone. Local elected officials, planners, service providers, civic groups, foundations and other interested parties must join together to address the local issues that make "aging in place" a reality.

President Johnson commented when the Act was first signed into law, *"The grants under this law will be modest in dollars, but will be far-reaching in results. Its results will come where they are needed-always at the hometown level. I am hopeful, as I know and believe that the Congress is hopeful, that this will permit us to find greater uses for the skills and the wisdom and the experience that is found in the maturity of our older citizens."* The importance of those words and the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 2005 cannot be overstated. Listed below are several reasons why reauthorization is a necessity:

- ✓ Give Older Adults the Opportunity to Live Independently and with Dignity at Home.
- ✓ Provide a Better Quality of Life for Millions of Older Adults through Nutrition Programs.
- ✓ Offer a Way for Older Adults and their Families to Get the Help they Need.
- ✓ Support Family Caregivers.
- ✓ Save the Government Money.
- ✓ Build on a Highly Successful and Cost-Effective Federal Program.
- ✓ Keep Pace with Inflation and the Growing Number of Older Adults.

If you would like further information on this subject, please visit our web-site at www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices or call 858-8526, or another web-site: <http://www.n4a.org/OAAReauthRecomm2005.cfm>

A home isn't just a building...it's a person's single most important resource, as well as the physical embodiment of their independence and the repository of many years of memories and hopes. One of the greatest fears of older adults is that they may one day have to leave their home. That's why you're invited to a **FREE** information fair on Aging in Place in WNY on **Saturday October 22, 2005 from 9 am to noon** at the **Harvey D. Morin VFW**, 965 Center Road, West Seneca, NY 14224. It's an opportunity to talk with professionals and learn more about assistance, help, programs and services that can help you "age in place" to maintain your independence and home. In addition to Senior Services, other professionals and resource specialists will share their expertise on: home design/remodeling; property maintenance; transportation services; reverse mortgages; health and medical products; adult day services; household chore services; legal services; independent living strategies; long term care insurance; home health care services; financial planning; and much more.

Aging in Place is celebrated across the country to increase awareness that simple solutions can help make a home safer. Many homeowners should consider taking proactive steps to modify their homes to make them safe and comfortable as they age. Simple ideas to increase ease of use and safety include: non-skid flooring; non-skid strips in the shower; improved lighting, particularly at tops and bottoms of stairs; and lever handles instead of standard round doorknobs. Many products and programs are available to fit individual needs. Visit the information fair on Oct. 22 to get some ideas—Free Admission & Drawings! Call 908-1074 for more info.

"This year, the century has reached the age of 65, and nearly one out of ten Americans has lived that full span or longer. Lengthening the life span is a major achievement of our time. It is also the source of one of the major challenges to the values and the vision of our Great Society. This Older Americans Act that we meet here this morning to bring into being--the act of 1965, the act that isknown as the Fogarty-McNamara bill--will help us to meet that challenge for more than 18 million Americans who have already reached age 65, as well as the hundreds of thousands or more who are becoming 65 at the rate of 1 every 20 seconds."

~ Lyndon B. Johnson July 14th, 1965

"Pro"fessors Needed! Learning doesn't stop at the age of 60 – it's a lifelong project!

We seek retired university/college faculty or other retired professionals willing to volunteer to teach one or two courses at a senior center. These are not the usual community education offerings such as crafting and calligraphy, but academic courses ranging from astronomy to zoology, from bioinformatics to world religions, etc. through classes held weekly for 4-6 weeks. The Fall series of classes have already filled, but classes will start again in April, so call RSVP in early Spring if you want to attend a class.

Mature students are enthusiastic, willing to question and discuss, and attend because they want to learn. Some older people may not be comfortable in a "traditional academic setting" such as college, filled with younger people preparing for employment, but still like intellectual stimulation and learning new things.

To find out more about participating as a volunteer teacher, call Patricia Dowling, Erie County Retired & Senior Volunteer Program at 858-7548 or email at dowlingp@erie.gov

Beginning January 1, 2006, Medicare will provide prescription drug coverage through Part D. **Coverage is not automatic**—you must choose and enroll in a prescription plan.

You should **enroll in a Medicare drug plan between November 15 and December 31, 2005**. There are premium penalties for late enrollment in the Medicare prescription plans, so do not delay your decision. You can get specific information after October 15, 2005 by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or at www.medicare.gov. Most people will pay a monthly premium, an annual deductible, and co-payments which will vary according to the plan you choose. If you enroll now, you won't have to pay penalties for delaying. It's estimated that about one-third of all seniors will qualify for additional assistance based on income and assets.

Medicare “Extra Help” is available if: Your 2005 income is below \$12,920 if single or \$17,321 for a married couple; resources such as stocks/bonds/savings/CDs, IRAs, are no greater than 11,500 for a single person or \$23,000 for a married couple. If income and resources are slightly higher, you may qualify for some “extra help” in paying for any premiums, deductible, and co-payments—Call 858-7883 for details. Applications for “Extra Help” are now available from the Social Security Administration and should be completed as soon as possible.

If you have a Medigap plan that includes prescription drug coverage, but prefer to enroll in a new Part D plan, you may continue your existing Medigap plan without drug coverage (a lower premium) OR you may enroll in a new Medigap plan without drug coverage. If you keep your current Medigap policy, you will be subject to premium penalties if you decide to enroll in Part D later, unless your Medigap plan tells you it is at least equal in value to the Part D benefit. (Keep your letter explaining your current coverage is creditable.)

EPIC will continue to exist to ensure New York State seniors receive the drugs they need. EPIC enrollees that choose to join a Medicare drug plan can also keep their EPIC Coverage, and by using Medicare and EPIC together, seniors can save even more! All EPIC enrollees should consider joining a Medicare Drug Plan. Those enrollees eligible for full “extra help” who join a Medicare drug plan will have their EPIC fees waived—they will not pay a premium or deductible for Medicare drug coverage, and will pay much lower co-payments (\$2 for generic and \$5 for brand name drugs) than with EPIC.

EPIC can be used to “wrap around” the Medicare drug benefit for greater coverage and savings—the pharmacy will automatically bill EPIC for any prescription costs not covered by Medicare (including any Medicare deductible, co-payment, gap in coverage, or non-covered drug) so that seniors using EPIC and Medicare together pay the lowest possible co-payment. EPIC can be used to cover drugs that may not be covered by your Medicare drug plan.

Senior Services HIICAP volunteers will be conducting outreach events throughout the community to educate, explain, and assist you with questions and/or enrollment in the new Medicare Prescription Plans. Call 858-7883 for a schedule, or visit our website at www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices. HIICAP workers are specially trained in insurances available locally, and answer your questions at no charge.

HIICAP and EPIC will help enrollees apply for “extra help” and select a Medicare plan that meets your drug needs and pharmacy preferences. **Erie County Senior Services HIICAP line is 858-7883**; EPIC hotline 1-800-331-3742; Social Security is 1-800-772-1213; Medicare is 1-800-633-4227.

Caregivers! This Day Is For You!

October 15, 2005
8:30 AM — 3:00 PM

Michael's Banquet Facility
4885 Southwestern Blvd.
Hamburg



Caregiver Resource Center

Although there is no charge for this Workshop & Resource Day, registration is required.

To register please call:

(716) 858-2177

or e-mail

caregiver@erie.gov

Workshop topics include:

- Stressed? Frustrated? Overwhelmed? Yes, You Can Deal With It!
- Assisting With Personal Care & Using Special Equipment
- Classic Caregiver Concerns & What To Do
- Dealing With Challenging Behaviors
- It's The Law—What You Need To Know
- The How To's of Personal Care
- Activities for Loved Ones With Dementia
- Resource Tables with Local Vendors

Hosted by:

**Erie County Caregiver Coalition and
Kaleida Health Geriatric Ambulatory Program**

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes continue to be scheduled throughout the area—call 858-2177 to inquire about a location and time that might work for you, or check out the schedule on the website www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices. Fall locations include South Buffalo, Amherst, Cheektowaga, Kenmore, and Hamburg.

I Apologize- A moving plea for understanding victims of Alzheimer's

Caregiver Resource Center

To the woman in the booth behind us--I apologize for my mother. She isn't aware she is staring at you "watching you eat." All she is aware of is the activity around her, and the music of voices raised in conversation. All she is doing is looking around her with the wonder of a child trying to see everything, but without the ability any longer to know that she might offend. I will not deny her the joy she finds in going to dinner, although all she will remember is the joy but not what caused it.

To the kids on the sidewalk behind us--I apologize for my mother. She shuffles rather than walks. We go slowly, with her trustingly holding my hand as I did hers when I was a child and these roles were reversed. She can't hurry up. Pushing her or calling her names cannot make her walk any faster. Her body and her mind are fragile now and neither will be getting any better. So walk around us quietly, and hope it will never be you and your mother walking slowly together on the sidewalk.

To the man in the checkout line--I apologize for my mother. She is living in a world of 70 years ago. She meant no offense and intended a compliment when she called you a fine-looking Negro. Your harsh words will make no difference to her. She can't remember them, and all she will remember is hurting because someone yelled at her.

To Mom's friends--I apologize for my mother. She doesn't remember the you of today. When she sees you when we are out, you are a stranger. She will greet you with the inborn graciousness she has always possessed but she doesn't know you. The you of yesterday, however, is a source of joy to her as she talks about the things you did together "just last week."

To the police--I apologize for my mother. I believe that somewhere inside she knows that something is wrong, and she wants to go home. Home is 70 years ago on a farm in North Carolina with her mother and father and three sisters. Thank you for taking the time to understand and bring her back to me when she goes searching for her home.

To my cousins--I apologize for my mother. As her nieces and nephews she has always loved you all dearly. But she doesn't know you now. Most of the time she doesn't know that I am her daughter. A little more of her slips away every day. But as she looks at the family photo albums the love she feels for you has not dimmed.

To my husband--I apologize for my mother. She has always loved you as a son. I see the pain you feel watching her fade further and further away from us every day. I have watched you build a place for her in our home without a word of thanks from her or even acknowledgement of your accomplishments. I couldn't do this without you. Your support and love for both of us keeps me going.

Thank you.

by Nancy Stead,
Wildwood, New Jersey
as seen in
Heartwarmers.com



Nancy Stead lives with her husband Brian and her mother Lois Cunningham (who has Alzheimer's) in Wildwood, New Jersey, along with their six cats.

NUTRITION PROGRAM

STAY FIT DINING

Stay Fit: with Updated Health Tips, Exercise Classes & Information for Seniors

By Susan J. Radke RD, CDN

The Department of Senior Services Nutrition Program again enjoyed a successful partnership with the University of Buffalo Dietetic Internship Program this summer. We were especially fortunate in obtaining a student intern who had his PhD in Health and Exercise Science and was in the process of becoming a Registered Dietitian. While interning with us; Tony Santo, PhD had a two-fold project:

#1-to update the Nutrition Education materials that we use at our dining sites and

#2-To assist our Senior Fitness Specialist Richard Derwald aka "Mr. Fitness" in our ever growing and popular Exercise program at the sites.

I'm happy to report that both assignments were successfully, enthusiastically completed!

Our Nutrition Education materials and handouts are re-vamped with up to the minute information on nutrition topics appropriate for our 60+ population. Now called: "Health Tips for Seniors" these handouts are available on a variety of topics: The new 2005 Food Guide Pyramid, Calcium & Osteoporosis, Exercise, Fats, Fiber, Freezer-Life of Foods, Vitamins and Minerals, High Blood Pressure, Hydration, Functional Foods, Food Safety, Sodium Reduction, Trans Fats, Understanding Food Labels, Vegetables, Vitamin and Mineral Supplementation—just to name a few. And best of all – our Nutrition education is now available

on the Web: www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices (click on "Health", then "Important Information about Nutrition Health and Fitness"). We even have an evaluation survey of educational materials that can be completed and returned to the nearest dining site location or to the nutrition program office at: Stay Fit Dining, Erie County Department of Senior Services, 95 Franklin Street, Buffalo, New York 14202.

These dining site locations have exercise:

Akron-Newstead
Alexander Community Center
Amherst Senior Center
The Belle Center
Blasdell (Lilly Housing Dev.)
Buffalo Urban League
Cayuga Village Apartments,
Clarence Senior Citizen Center
Kenmore/Mang
Lackawanna Senior Center
Maryvale East Sr. Complex (Moorman)
Moot Senior Center
North Buffalo Community Center
Salvation Army Headquarters
Salvation Army-Tonawanda Branch
Second Baptist Church
Seneca-Babcock Community
Tosh Collins Center
Town of Evans Senior Center,
Valley Community Center
Walden Park Senior Complex

Be sure and sign up for exercise and stay for lunch for a nice, healthy way to begin your weekend!

**For more information on the Stay Fit Exercise & Dining Program
call 858-7639!**

NUTRITION PROGRAM

STAY FIT DINING

That Old Summer Pastime—Bisons Baseball!

On August 11, hundreds of seniors enjoyed watching the Bisons' 3-1 win over Ottawa. Through the generosity of BlueCross/Blue Shield of WNY the seniors enjoyed taking a bus from their senior center; picnic before the game including hot dogs, hamburgers, potato salad, chef salad, soft drinks; and fun and games in the tent with music and prize give-aways. Senior Services and Cornell Cooperative Extension had nutritional information, and the Food Bank of WNY gave away bags of groceries to seniors who could correctly answer trivia questions. It was a great summer day in Buffalo, and Senior Services thanks the Buffalo Bisons, BlueCross/Blue Shield of WNY, and the Food Bank of WNY.



Our Senior Fitness Specialist Richard Derwald with our student intern Tony Santo after completing an uplifting exercise session at the Kenmore/Mang Senior Nutrition site, 135 Wilbur Ave. Kenmore, 873-7500



The Catholic Health System HealthConnection offers the following programs for **FREE** (unless noted). All seminars are at Appletree Business Park, 2875 Union Road, Suite 8A in Cheektowaga, NY 14227, unless noted otherwise. Space is limited for all programs, so please **call Health Connection at 447-6205 as registration is required.** Website at www.chsbuffalo.org

•**Middle Eastern Dance for Fun and Fitness—Wednesday, October 5 to November 9** (6 weeks) 6:30 PM Middle Eastern Dance is an ancient form of dance and exercise that helps you relax physically and mentally. Learn basic movements to improve circulation and tone muscles while having fun. (COST \$50 Held at Kenmore Mercy Hospital)

•**Trim & Slim Cooking Tips—Thursday, October 6, 6:30 PM** Healthy cooking shouldn't be boring. Learn fresh, creative ideas to prepare delicious, healthy, and appetizing low carb meals.

•**Humor for the Health of It—Wednesday, October 12, 7:00 PM** Feeling overworked, tired, or stressed out? Need a little humor? Find the time to work toward optimal health and become a fun-loving, more relaxed you.

•**Free Varicose Vein Screening Saturday, October 15 BY APPOINTMENT ONLY – Call 447-6205** Vascular Intervention Associates will conduct a free screening to detect varicose veins. This screening is noninvasive to detect venous disease.

•**What's Keeping You Awake Nights? - Wednesday, October 19, 7:00 PM** Surveys show that 1 out of every 2 American adults snores occasionally and 1 out of 4 snores regularly. Discuss the causes and treatment of snoring and sleep apnea.

•**Super Suppers in a Flash—Thursday, October 20, 6:30 PM** Make meal planning easy, spend less time in the kitchen, and eat healthier too. Creative new ways to make quick and delicious meals.

•**Beyond the Basics "Know Your Healthy Steps" Thursday, October 27, 2005, 6:00 PM @ Marian Professional Center.** This program presents strategies to help prevent diabetes & its complications. It is designed to help people with diabetes understand the role of exercise in maintaining or improving their overall health. Participants will receive a guide booklet and a pedometer. Pre-registration is required. A light dinner will be served.

•**Forgetfulness...when is it cause for concern? Thursday, November 3, 7:00 PM** Is it normal for me to forget things at my age or should I be concerned? Seminar will present ways to identify normal age related memory loss and when it becomes a more serious problem.

•**Incontinence Wednesday, November 9, 7:00 PM** Don't suffer in silence - In most cases urinary incontinence can be treated, if not cured. There is help. Learn steps you can take to be more proactive in seeking treatment.

•**Are You at Risk for Diabetes? Thursday, November 10, 6:30 PM** 18.2 million people in the US have diabetes. One in three does not know it. If you are over 40, have high blood pressure, are overweight, or have a family history of type 2 diabetes this program is for you. Life style changes can reduce or eliminate the risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

•**Too Little Time...Too Much to Do? Wednesday, December 7, 7:00 PM** Do you feel you have little control over your time? Practical tips to prioritize tasks and minimize distractions to add time to your day.

"I am very proud to have the privilege of now signing into law this measure for the benefit of the men and women who have done so much in this century to build in America a just, a decent, a free, and a peaceful society. I hope that every person within the sound of my voice will be willing to continue to unite behind us in not only expanding the life expectancy in this country, but in trying to help our neighbors in the world to achieve the same remarkable results that all of you, members of both parties, by working together, have achieved in this country."

President Lyndon B. Johnson on signing the Older Americans Act legislation in 1965.
(more info on page 1 and 2)

Bottle up Medicare and Medicaid fraud with a free phone call!

New Yorkers are working together to fight the Medicare and Medicaid fraud that robs us of billions of dollars every year!

New York's program to fight this fraud - **Operation Restore Trust** - announces its new, toll-free number for reporting fraud and abuse of the Medicare and Medicaid programs:



1-877-ORT-4NYS
(1-877-678-4697)

It's easy, it's free and it's here for you!

You may be eligible for a FREE 2-week starter kit of nicotine patches!

90% of smokers who used the patch said it helped to relieve the stress of quitting. Talk with Quitline Specialists Mon-Fri. 9am—9pm and Sat-Sun 9am—1pm to see if you are eligible for the patch, or for other help. Call toll free **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487). If you are ready to quit smoking, the **NYS Smokers' Quitline** is ready to help! www.nysmokefree.com

FREE Colon Cancer Screening Kit

Are you age 50 and over? Colon Cancer is the 2nd leading cause of cancer deaths, but did you know that early colon cancer screening is the best way to find polyps before they "go bad"? Partners For Prevention: Cancer Screening Services of Erie County offers free colon cancer screening kits for both men and women over age 50. This simple kit is mailed to your home with complete directions for use and a return mailing envelope. Everyone who returns the kit within 30 days receives a Tops Gift Card as a special Thank-You! Please call **Partners For Prevention** today to request your free colon cancer screening kit...**886-9201**.

Thank You For Your Support and Generosity

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As the number of seniors grows, so does the need for our vast array of services. The Department of Senior Services encourages and appreciates donations. If you are in a position to do so, please fill out the form below. 100% of your contribution will be used to provide direct service to an older adult in need. **Thank you!!!!**

I designate my donation of \$_____ for:

_____ Newsletter

_____ In-home services

_____ Transportation

_____ **Use where most needed**

_____ Home-delivered meals

_____ Adult day services

Mail to:

Erie County Department of Senior Services
95 Franklin St., Rm. 1329
Buffalo, NY 14202

Please make check payable to:

Erie County Department of Senior Services.
Your check is your receipt.

Medicare Part D Prescription Coverage — coming soon to you . . .



Dr. Mark McClellan, Administrator of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) poses with Senior Services' staff members Charles Battaglia, Commissioner Pam Krawczyk, and Bill Daniels in front of the Medicare Outreach bus. On August 17th, Dr. McClellan and Congressman Tom Reynolds facilitated a meeting at the Amherst Senior Center to share plans about upcoming outreach and education activities designed to inform people about the new Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit. Senior Services' HIICAP program will continue to hold community

outreach events through the Fall and Winter to help seniors learn more about Medicare Part D. Basics of the plan call for most people to pay a monthly premium, a yearly deductible (\$250 in 2006), and then Medicare pays 75% of a person's drug costs with the individual paying 25% up to \$2,250 in drug costs. At that point, the individual pays all drug costs up to a total of \$5,100, at which point Medicare then pays 95% and the enrollee pays 5% for the rest of that year. More details about Medicare Part D are on page 4 of this newsletter, and much information is on our website at www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices/health/medicare.asp

The next issue of *60 Plus* will be late March/early April 2006

Go to www.erie.gov/depts/seniorservices to read it on-line
or to find a vendor location listed by zip code, or call us at 858-2117.

Our sincere thanks to all those who make this newsletter available.



ERIE COUNTY 60 PLUS

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From the County Executive...



County Executive
Joel A. Giambra

HEAP stands for Home Energy Assistance Program, a federally funded fuel assistance program designed to help with rising energy costs. If a household meets certain income criteria HEAP helps pay some of your utility cost (gas/electric/oil/propane). The HEAP benefit ranges from \$40 to \$400. Eligibility for participation is based upon gross family income and household size—this year a married couple with monthly income of \$2,358 (single monthly income up to \$1,803) is eligible for assistance. Public Assistance and Food Stamp recipients automatically receive Regular HEAP. The Erie County Department of Senior Services HEAP (Hotline 716-858-7870) is responsible for outreach and certification of the non-public assistance population of Erie County aged 60+ and certain segments of the disabled population. The office also conducts interviews for all segments of the population at various outreach sites throughout Erie County.

Senior Citizens and disabled applicants may apply by mail as soon as they receive an application. Senior Services will begin mailing applications in September/October. The HEAP season usually opens for face to face interviews in November. The Senior Services HEAP office is located in the basement of the old Hens and Kelly building at 291 Pearl Street- Lower Mezzanine, Buffalo NY 14202. *Handicap access is the Main Street entrance to the building, 478 Main Street. Inquire at the guard desk, and a Senior Services worker will be called to assist you.

For additional information, please contact the Senior HEAP hotline at (716) 858-7870, Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Other Assistance Programs may be available to help with utility costs - call the Department of Senior Services at 858-8526.